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with me in my research; thus, I am forced to depend on data about his career provided me by his neighbors. It is hard to disentangle fact from hearsay in these materials, for he arouses extremes of feeling among islanders which can prompt distortions of information. I was told by several respondents—bitter foes of the king—that he conceives of himself as the moral guardian of the folk "who knows what is best for them;" he believes them to possess a childlike mentality and outlook on the world which necessitate his guidance (In talking with these respondents, who referred to the king as "the little priest," I was reminded of interviews in Africa seven years earlier concerning particular British colonial administrators, who conceived of their relationship with the Nigerians in like manner.).

A personable man of great charm, the king has a measure of charisma which commands deference and respect, and it is said that had he chosen to become a priest or businessman on the mainland, he would now be a bishop or captain of industry. His business acumen is acclaimed, and many have become his customers because they believe him to be more "clever" than city merchants and well able to deal with them to the advantage of the islanders. The sources of his power are many. He began his career as a shopkeeper in the 1920s, with money provided him by a brother living in the United States (or, as claimed by some, with the insurance money that he received as a beneficiary when his brother was killed while serving in the armed forces of this country). Two brothers older than himself—the eldest the landholder—live in Inis Beag with large families, and he has their support and that of his many other kin. He gained a large following during the depression years of the 1930s by extending credit to customers for months without charging interest; many folk still show gratitude for this gesture by buying only from him and by acquiescing to many of his wishes, although covertly they may resent being in his debt and under his influence. He is a friend of priests, politicians, and civil servants, who usually reside in his guest house when visiting Inis Beag, and he is a political activist in behalf of "Dev" and Fianna Fail. Another source of his power is the fact that he cashes most of the checks and changes most of the foreign currency received by the islanders, and thus knows of sources and amounts of income; it is feared that he might inform government officials of remittances and as a result jeopardize the old age and dole of any who earn his displeasure.

The king is most criticized for his "great riches," which arouse envy and jealousy in his neighbors. From time to time, rumors as to the amount of money deposited to his account in a mainland bank pass around Inis Beag, and arouse discussion of the bill of particulars against him. His involvement in the salvaging of the cargo of the grounded freighter brought to the surface all of the hostility toward him felt by the folk. He is supposed to have pooled his resources with several businessmen "from the city" to purchase the most valuable items of the cargo for resale at a "vast profit;" to safeguard these items until they could be salvaged and shipped off on the steamer, he consorted with owners of the steamship company, customs officials, the guards, and even the curate to prevent the islanders ("who only saved the lives of the crew") from observing the law of wrack and thereby reducing his profit. It is held that he persuaded the curate to deliver sermons denouncing the "looting" of the ship as sinful, and he allowed his

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especially outside of Ireland. Four islanders have entered orders—two priests and two nuns—and have brought their families not only prestige but an aura of sanctity; it is believed by the folk that God bestows grace on his earthly representatives and on their kin as well. Even the king is thought to receive some measure of supernatural support for the period of time that he spent during his youth, as is rumored, as a servant at Maynooth Seminary.

The folk rank one another according to their ability to row the *curach*, fish, farm, knit, and perform other economic tasks, although such talents do not bring the prestige that they once did. I often have heard individuals chaffed publicly, sometimes even to their faces, for possessing less than average skills, and many persons have told me privately that they admire or envy the skills of others and wish that they themselves were more adept. A man who owns land in the quarter of another village told me that he works painstakingly in setting a garden there, since his efforts will be appraised by the alien villagers and pitilessly condemned if found wanting. Women gain most of their prestige through performing well the tasks ascribed to them by the division of labor. The economic skills of individuals who lived in the past are lauded more than those of contemporary islanders, reflecting the shift of emphasis in the prestige system; this is far more the case with singing, dancing, and storytelling, as well as with the display of strength and courage. Institutionalized storytelling had disappeared from Inis Beag before 1960, although raconteurs of note still hold forth in the pubs and at small social gatherings. These persons, and the several who excel at singing and dancing, are held in high repute. Probably the best liked of the islanders is a man of 72 years who is admired for his wit, charm, friendliness, and agile step dancing. When drinking in the pubs, he enjoys telling anecdotes about his past experiences, singing and dancing, expressing a simulated sadness at his bachelor estate, and poking sly fun at the behavior of certain folk. Although he is landless and thought to be overly lazy, he is ranked high in the prestige hierarchy because of his esthetic talents and occasional *joie de vivre*. His recluse brother of opposite temperament remarked sadly, "Even the stones of the island know him, but no one knows me." Another landless man, now deceased, who was about the same age, enjoyed high status because he was a traditional storyteller, was noted as a young man for his exceptional strength and athletic and rowing prowess, had spent a decade in the United States, and by reading had educated himself well above the level of most of the folk.

Stories abound concerning once famous men of strength and courageous deeds in Inis Beag and the surrounding region. These anecdotes are recounted more during the summer months than the winter ones, when tourists are within earshot and can be suitably impressed. Acts of courage performed by folk in the past mostly deal with mishaps which occurred to crews while fishing or traveling to and from nearby islands or the mainland. The feats of strength performed by former athletes—such as putting the shot, long jumping, and "throwing the half-hundred"—are well within the realm of possibility, but other feats usually are grossly exaggerated. Examples of the latter are the man who, grasping the base of the front leg of a chair in which sat a person weighing 11 stones (154 pounds), lifted it with one hand, also the man who raised over his head "with ease" a struggling opponent of 16 stones (224 pounds) in a pub fight.